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DATE: April 26, 2002

TO: General Educational Development (GED) Chief Examiners, Alternate Examiners and Proctors

FROM: Mark Fetler, State GED Administrator
California Department of Education

SUBJECT: GED Update, April 2002

GED Internet Issues

With a few exceptions, most testing centers that submitted an Internet Access Application have been contacted and are now accessing the ETS database of GED scores. Testing centers should now be able to search for records and print score reports from the site. We realize that this has been a difficult transition in many respects and would like to thank all center staff members for your patience and input as we work to improve the system.

If you have not applied for web access and now wish to, complete the attached "Application for Internet Access" form and return it to the State GED Office.

The site has undergone a number of enhancements since it was launched a month ago, and the most recent change includes the ability to search through the entire database of California's 2002 scores. ETS technical staff are exploring options that would allow testing sites to print score reports in batches instead of individually.

We realize that there have been significant delays in reporting some scores and have worked with a number of centers and candidates to retrieve scores when there is a critical need for this information. Virtually all the delays in reporting scores, however, have begun with examinee errors on the bubble-sheets. Sometimes this error-rate has been as high as 50% per batch of answer sheets. *Please emphasize to examinees that they must be very careful to bubble information in correctly and that errors will delay reporting of their scores.* Claudia Bass at ETS has informed us that common problems with processing include:

- Pencil in more than one bubble in a single column
- Using ink instead of a #2 pencil to bubble in answer sheets

- Be aware that it is also important that centers bubble their own testing center identification number correctly on the Test Center Identification Sheet. We have had a number of situations where centers requesting hard copy received scores for examinees who tested at other centers because of this error.

Under no circumstances may testing centers refer examinees or other inquirers directly to Educational Testing Service. Our contract with ETS prohibits them from divulging information regarding scores to any person other than a Chief or Alternate Chief Examiner.

Logging In, Score Reports & Printing

Some centers have internet browser software that offers the option of saving passwords so that they are not required to re-type them on subsequent login attempts. **Do not save the passwords—this poses a security risk to the confidentiality of GED records.**

Do not, under any circumstances, provide examinees with access codes or passwords.

Be aware that the website address, passwords and access codes must be typed in *exactly* as they were given to you by State GED Office staff. If you have three consecutive failed login attempts, your account will be designated inactive.

Testing centers are expected to print the unofficial report of test results from the website and mail it to the examinee. If you are receiving paper copies of scores from ETS, you will mail the paper copy to the examinee. The report is formatted so that the examinee address will appear in a window envelope when the paper copy is folded. ETS has informed us that a Columbian #7 double window envelope (3 7/8 x 8 7/8) handles the placement of the examinee address.

The score report is printed on plain paper. We are not as yet able to utilize the pre-printed *Official Report of GED Test Results* that is distributed by GED Testing Service (GEDTS); this form requires a computer program that analyzes candidates' responses and prints a written analysis of the candidates' scores in addition to a bar graph of the scores and the standard scores themselves. We will notify centers if and when we are able to use this form.

In the meantime, we recommend that centers either print the unofficial score reports on copy-protect paper or stamp a school seal on the transcript so that recipients can verify authenticity. Also, please make sure to format your Network setup file so that the website address will not print at the top or bottom of the transcript. The following procedure will accomplish this:

- While in your web browser, click on *File*
- Select *Page Setup*
- Find the area in the *page setup* menu that designates what will appear as "headers" or "footers."
- Delete any extraneous header or footer information. In most cases, this means you will delete everything but the "date printed" option for a header/footer.
- Click on "ok."

What does a Score of "0" Mean on the Language Arts/Writing Score?

Candidates must earn at least a score of "4" on the essay to pass the Writing test. If this score is not earned, a standard score of "0" is reported because the multiple-choice portion of the Writing test cannot be reported separately. A score of "0" is also earned if the essay is off-topic or illegible.

Spanish Testing Issues

GED Testing Service announced last week that the new generation of Spanish-language tests will be delayed an additional year because of the time needed for norming and standardization. As a result, we will continue to have only two forms of the test available this year. Next year, four forms will be available. The new Spanish tests will be introduced in 2004.

The State GED Office has received numerous complaints that the older answer sheets for the Spanish-language tests do not contain enough spaces for complete addresses or names. If this is

the case with any examinee, submit a completed "Name and Address Change" form along with the old answer sheet--the answer sheet must be completed with as much of the name and address information as will fit on the form. ETS will scan the complete name/address into the record from the "Name and Address Change" so it can be reported correctly.

Also, a number of centers have pointed out that the posted test date is actually the date the answer sheets were scored. Unfortunately, the older answer sheets do not contain a field for gridding in the test date for each test. You may, however, grid in the date the test was completed on the GED "Test Center Identification Sheet" that you submit with the batch. This will not be completely accurate if your batch of answer sheets contains tests that were administered on multiple dates, but it will be a more accurate reflection of the date when the test was administered.

Ordering Bubble Sheets

Because answer sheets are now turned in more frequently, many centers are running out of them earlier than would normally be expected. An order form is attached if you need to order additional scannable materials before the end of the year.

Applications for Special Testing/Tracking Sheets

Any L-15 Forms (applications for special testing due to learning disabilities or attention deficit disorders) or SA-001 Forms (applications for special testing due to physical or emotional disabilities) turned into the State GED Office must be accompanied by the Accommodations Tracking Sheet, which is ordered from the GED Testing Service. There is no charge for these tracking sheets (except for shipping), which may be ordered using the attached order form. Applications received without the accompanying tracking sheet will be returned to the testing center.

Certificate Application Process for pre-July, 1990 Scores

Several centers have inquired how examinees who took and passed the test prior to July of 1990 should apply for certificates at this point. Refer these candidates directly to the State GED Office at 800-331-6316, and we will provide them with the appropriate certificate application and instructions.

GEDTS Billing Address

GEDTS recently requested that the State GED Office verify correct billing addresses for testing centers in California. At what address should you receive bills from the GED Testing Service for testing materials, answer sheets, etc.? Complete the enclosed billing information sheet and return it to Nancy Edmunds, Associate Analyst in the State GED Office at P.O. Box 710273; Sacramento, CA 94244-0273.

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**GED TESTING SERVICE BILLING ADDRESS
VERIFICATION FORM**

Bills/Invoices from the GED Testing Service for testing materials and the \$7.50 national per-person fee should be delivered to the following address for the testing center named below:

Center Name

Center Identification Number

Billing Address

City, State, Zip

Contact Person/Department

Signature, Authorized Chief or Alternate Examiner

This information may be mailed to Nancy Edmunds, Associate Analyst in the State GED Office at P.O. Box 710273; Sacramento, CA 94244-0273.